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Three Babylonian Tablets, Prince Collection, Columbia University. — By Rev. FREDERICK A. VANDERBURGH, Ph. D., Columbia University, New York City.

Three light dull-red baked clay-tablets, each five and a quarter centimeters long by three and a half in breadth and two in thickness; corners and edges rounded.

Nr. 1.

Memoranda for the month of *Simānu* of food consumed by messengers going to *Anšān*, *Sabūm* and *Šimāš*; also of those returning from *Susa*, *Huhunuri* and *Adamdun*. The temple in which the memoranda were made and the approximate date can only be conjectured. Perhaps the capital city at this time was *Ur*. The obverse contains eleven lines and the reverse nine. The signs are all legible.

Obverse

BAR *zid ud-min-kam šà-uru*

Ten (*ka*) of meal for two days in the city,

ia ka zid kaskal-šù

five *ka* of meal on the journey,

i-me-ta šukkal

for *Imeta* the messenger,

an-šá-an-ki-šù gin-ni

on going to *Anšān*.

5 BAR *zid ud-min-kam šà-uru*

Ten (*ka*) of meal for two days in the city,

ia ka zid kaskal-šù

five *ka* of meal on the journey,

lù-na-ba-a gîn-giš

for *Lunabâ* the weigh-master,

sa-bu-um-ki-šû gin-ni

on going to *Sabûm*.

ia ka zid lugal-mâ-gur-ri šukkal

Five *ka* of meal for *Lugalmagurri* the messenger,

10 *nanâ-erin-ki-ta gin-ni*

coming from *Susa*.

BAR *zid ud-min-kam šâ-uru*

Ten (*ka*) of meal for two days in the city,

Reverse

ia ka zid kaskal-šû

five *ka* of meal on the journey,

i-ti-da šukkal

for *Itida* the messenger,

ši-ma-ûš-ki-šû gin-ni

on going to *Šimâš*.

15 *ia ka zid dingir-ra-ne šukkal*

Five *ka* of meal for *Dingirrane* the messenger,

hu-hu-nu-ri-ta gin-ni

coming from *Huhunuri*.

ia ka zid â-ne-ni šukkal

Five *ka* of meal for *Aneni* the messenger,

a-dam-dun-ki-ta gin-ni

coming from *Adamdun*.

itu gud-du-ne-sar-sar

The month of *Simanu*.

The first two signs are BAR and KU. BAR with *ka* equals 'ten', otherwise BAR equals 'one half'. Here *ka* must be understood with BAR, whose value when standing for 'ten' was probably *u*; we know it to be *maš* when standing for 'half'. KU as 'meal' or 'flour' has the value *zid* = Assyrian *kêmu*. One *ka* is approximately equal to one liter. The duties of a *šukkal* (LAḪ), equal to *sukallu*, also called *luh*, were more than those of merely bearing a message; they were doubtless administrative and representative. This is confirmed by such expressions as the following which

is taken from a brick of *Temti-agun*: "*Temti-agun* the *šukkal* of *Susa* for his life a *zî-anam* to *Išmekarab* has built". *te-im-ti-a-gu-un šukkal šu-si-im a-na ba-la-ṭi-šu zi-i-a-nam a-na iš-me-ka-ra-ab i-pu-uš*.¹ In a brick by *Temti-ḫalki*, *Temti-ḫalki* is called the *šukkal-maḥ* of *Elam* (and) *Šimaš*. *araḥ simāni* is the third month of the year — May-June; the ideogram *itu gud-du-ne-sar-sar* given in the tablet is old Babylonian; the Assyrian ideogram is *itu šeg-ga*.

Nr. 2.

Memoranda for the month of *Airu* of wine consumed by messengers returning from *Susa* and also *Sabûm*, as well as those journeying to *Anšân*. The nature of the mission of these messengers is not divulged. Their names are given and in some cases their occupation, or the fact that they are officials. The obverse contains thirteen lines and the reverse nine, including the date, which, however, forms a line separated from the rest of the composition by the space of a centimeter. One sign was almost wholly erased by the pressure of a finger before the tablet was baked. The characters are clear, although made with a fine stylus.

Obverse

ia ka kaš

Five *ka* of wine,

šû-dingir-nin-šul šukkal

for *Šu-ninšul* the messenger,

ia ka kaš ur-dingir-igi-ši gin-giš gal

five *ka* of wine for *Ur-igiši* the chief weigh-master,

nanâ-erin-ki-ta gin-ni

coming from *Susa*.

5 BAR *kaš šà-uru*

Ten (*ka*) of wine while in the city,

áš kaš u-sa kaskal-šû

one (*ka*) of wine of the *sa*-plant on the journey,

la-ni-a lû-giš-ku gu-la

for *Lania* the chief spearsman,

¹ Scheil, *Textes Élamites-sémitiques première et troisième Série*, Pl. 7; 15; 20; 74.

ia ka kaš i-šiš-ki-ni šukkal

five *ka* of wine for *Išiškini* the messenger,

ia ka kaš zib-iš-ni-šu dumu nu-banda

five *ka* of wine for *Zibišnišu* the junior overseer,

10 *sa-bu-um-ki-ta gin-ni*

coming from *Sabûm*.

BAR kaš ud-min-kam šà-uru

Ten (*ka*) of wine for two days in the city,

áš kaš ú-sa kaskal-šu

one (*ka*) of wine of the *sa*-plant on the journey,

šu-dingir-en-lil šukkal

for *Šu-enlil* the messenger,

Reverse

DIŠ kaš šà-uru

sixty (?) (*ka*) of wine while in the city,

15 *DIŠ-AŠ kaš kaskal-šu*

ninety (?) (*ka*) of wine on the journey,

nim an-šá-an-ki-me

for the ruler of the *Anšānites*,

gir šu-dingir-en-lil šukkal

for the *gir Šu-enlil* the messenger,

an-šá-an-ki-šu gin-ni

going to *Anšân*.

ia ka kaš i-sar-ba-kal šukkal

Five *ka* of wine for *Isarbakal* the messenger,

20 *ia ka kaš ba-ba-a dumu nu-banda*

five *ka* of wine for *Babâ* the junior overseer,

nanâ-erin-ki-ta gin-ni

coming from *Susa*.

itu gan-maš

The month of *Áiru*.

1. *ka* is a measure for liquids as well as for dry material, with the same capacity in either instance.

3. *gîn* (TU)-*gîš* (UŠ) = 'weighing-man'; here we have *gîn-gîš gal*; in Tablet Nr. 1 simply *gîn-gîš*.

6. There are two kinds of wine mentioned in this Tablet. One is plain *kaš* (BI); the other is *kaš* (BI) -*ú-sa*. The ordinary Assyrian word for *kaš* is *šikaru* 'strong drink', also 'date-wine', the verb being *šakāru* 'be drunk'. The *sa*-plant, from which the other wine is made, may be the same as the *sa*-tree which had a strong fibre with which ropes were made, the word being connected with *sa* used for 'net'.

7. *lù-giš* (IZ) -*ku* = 'man of wooden weapon'; the value of KU in this connection, I must say, is not determined. In the expression 'chief helper', or 'chief spearsman', 'chief' is expressed by *gu-la* 'great'; in line three, where we have the expression 'chief weighmaster', 'chief' is expressed by *gal*.

14. If the sign DIŠ stands for 'one', it should probably have the value *áš*; if it stands for 'sixty', *giš* should doubtless be the value.

16. *nim an-šá-an-ki me* = 'ruler of the *Ansanites*'. *nim* = *šaku* 'high', i. e., a ruler or minister like a secretary of state. *me* at the end of the line may be the sign of the plural, a shortened form of *meš*.

17. *gir* = *šêpu* 'foot'; also *emûku* 'power'; then an official, for whom we have no Assyrian equivalent; this officer seems to have charge over other officials, particularly with reference to food supply.

20. *nu* (= *lù*) -*bandá* (TUR) = *labuttu* 'official', perhaps 'overseer', and *dumu* (TUR) = a 'youth of (attending upon) a *nu-bandá*'.

22. The month of *Airu*, second month, April-May, written in the Tablet *itu gan-maš* 'fields in blossom'. This is old Babylonian. The Assyrian ideogram is *itu gud-si-di* 'directing bull'.

Nr. 3.

Memoranda for the month of *Kisilimu* of wine, food, meat oil and also of women laborers for the officials of *Adamdun* and *Susa*. The obverse contains nine lines and the reverse twelve. The colophon, giving the date, is inscribed along the left side.

Obverse

DIŠ *kaš du lugal*

Sixty (?) (*ka*) of best common wine,

DIŠ *gar lugal* DIŠ *udu*
 sixty (?) (*ka*) of best food, sixty (?) sheep,

ù-ba-apa-te-si a-dam-dun-ki
 for Ubâ patesi of *Adamdun*,

a-dam-dun-ki-ta gin-ni
 coming from *Adamdun*.

5 PA *kaš BAR-min ka zid*
 Twenty (*ka*) of wine, twelve *ka* of flour,

limu (ZA) à-gam ni ud-limu-kam
 four vessels of oil for four days,

šú-kaṣ-ti lù-giṣ-ku gu-la
 for *Šukarti* the chief helper,

má-id-ta è-è-ne zid-a
 who goes out on the river-boat for meal.

ia ka kaš eš ka gar
 Five *ka* of wine, three *ka* of food.

Reverse

10 D I Š *à-gam ni šà-uru*
 sixty (?) vessels of oil in the city,

aš kaš ú-sa ia ka gar
 one (*ka*) of wine of the sa-plant, five *ka* of food,

kaskal-šù
 on the journey,

dingir-ma-su šukkal
 for *Dingirmasu* the messenger,

nanâ-erin-ki-šù gin-ni
 going to *Susa*.

15 *eš ka kaš min ka gar*
 Three *ka* of wine, two *ka* of food,

DIŠ *a-gam ni-giṣ*
 sixty (?) vessels of oil,

iš-me-a lù-kabar
 for *Išmea* an official;

ešu geme eš ka zid-še ia gân ni-giš-ta
 thirty women (each one) three *ka* of wheat-flour
 (and) five measures of oil (*per diem*),

ne-ra úš ag hu-hu-nu-ri-ki me
 for which they make an agreement,
 viz., they of *Huhunuri*,

20 *lù iš-me-a lù-kabar*
 for *Išmea* an official,

hu-hu-nu-ri-ki-ta gin-ni
 coming from *Huhunuri*.

itu ezin dingir-ba-u
 Month of *Kisilimu*.

5. The decimal system seems to be represented in two ways in these Tablets. 'Ten', 'twenty' and 'thirty' are represented by the use of the upright and one, two or three horizontals respectively; thus, BAR = 'ten', = val. *u*; PA = 'twenty', = val. *niš*; and AŠ = 'thirty' = val. *ešu*. Down below, line 18, the corner wedge system is used; EŠ = 'thirty' = val. *ešu*.

6. à (ID) -*gam* = 'vessel' of some sort, *gam* itself being equal to *kipattu*.

8. *má-id* (A. TÙ) -*ta* 'boat-river-from'. *é* (UD. DU) -*ne* = 'his going out'. *zid* (KU)-*a*: whether KU-*a* stands for *ašâbu* or *kêmu* is not quite clear; possibly the sign may not be KU.

16. *ni-giš* = 'oil of wood'. In lines six and ten *giš* is omitted.

19. In *ne-ra*, *ne* must be a pronoun and *ra* a postposition, *áš* a noun = *êdu* 'one', *barâmu* 'seal', *magâru* 'favor', *mitharu* 'agree' and other words of similar meaning, and *ag* a verb equal to *êpêšu* 'make' and *banû* 'build'. *me* at the end of the line is the sign of the plural.

21. *hu-hu-nu-ri-ki-ta* 'from the place *Huhunuri*'; *ki*, however, might be omitted; see Tablet 1, line 16.

22. Month of *Kisilimu*, ninth month, November-December, written in the Tablet *itu ezin* (SAR) *dingir-ba-u*, month of the festival of *Bau* who was the goddess of agriculture. The Assyrian ideogram is *itu gan-gan-na*.

Cities mentioned in the Tablets

Anšân, mentioned by Nabonidus in the *Abu-Habba* Cylinder¹ as a province of which Cyrus was king, must have been a very ancient center. In a list of dates given by *Dungi*² one date reads thus: *mu dumu-sal lugal pa-te-si an-ša-an-ki-ge ba-tug*, rather doubtfully translated by Scheil as 'the year when the daughter of the king became *patesi* of *Anšân*'. Gudea in Statue B³ also gives an interesting fact about *Anšân*. He says that he thrust down the weapons of the city of *Anšân* in Elam: *giš-ku uru-an-ša-an nim-ki mu-sig*.

Sabûm. On a door-socket, in which *Adad-nannar* memorializes the dedication of a temple built in *Gir-su* by *Gimil-Sin*, king of *Ur*, *Sabûm* is placed in the same list of cities as *Lagaš*. *Adad-nannar*, the chief minister calls himself *patesi* of *Lagaš*, *Gubelum*, *Ĥamaši*, *Ganĥar* and *Sabûm*.⁴

Susa, mentioned in the book of Esther: 'Given in Shushan the palace'; 'the city of Shushan was perplexed'. In our Tablet we have the Sumerian name for *Susa*: *nanâ-erin-ki* 'place of the goddess among cedars, plainly indicating the existence of a sacred grove'. In *Dungi*'s Brick C, we are told that he built a temple to the god of *Susa*; from other sources we learn that this divinity was *Šušinak*.⁵

Šimaš. This was an old Babylonian city existing at a time when its ruler was a *šukkal* or a *šukkal-mah*.⁵

Ĥuhunuri was a city flourishing in the dynasty of *Ur*, destroyed by *Bur-sin*.

Adamdun. From certain tablets we learn that *Adamdun* was a city governed by *patesi* and flourishing in the same period as the city of *Ĥuhunuri*.

Date of the Tablets

The nomenclature for the months would place the Tablets not later than the third or fourth Dynasty of *Ur*. The second month was written in the time of Sargon I: *ezin gan-maš*,

¹ *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, Vol. V, Plate 64.

² *Old Babylonian Inscriptions*, Plate 125.

³ Price's *Great Cylinder Inscriptions A and B* of Gudea.

⁴ *Revue d'Assyriologie* VI, S. 99.

⁵ Scheil, *Textes Élamites-sémitiques première et troisième Série*, Pl. 7; 15; 20; 74.

instead of simply *gan-maš*, and the third month: *ezin gud-du-ne-sar-sar*, and not simply *gud-du-ne-sar-sar*, as in the Dynasties of *Ur*. The name of the ninth month was written *ezin dingir ba-u* both in the time of Sargon I and of Dungi I, II and III. The six cities named in the Tablets, some of them Elamitic cities, are all mentioned in texts written concerning rulers of cities when *Dungi*, or *Bur-sin*, or *Gimil-sin* were supreme at *Ur*.